

capital of Moravia. Murat had been instructed to hang on the enemy's skirts and harass his retreat. Instead, he kept down the right bank of the Danube, hastening toward Vienna for the laurels he hoped to seize in occupying that undefended capital. "I cannot explain your behavior," wrote Napoleon to his brother-in-law; "you have lost me two days, and thought only on the glory of entering Vienna." In fact, an unsupported division under Mortier was caught by the Russians at Dürrenstein on the left bank and utterly destroyed. A victory won at Leoben by Ney over the Austrian division of Merveldt was unfortunately productive of no results and left Napoleon's situation very difficult. There was nothing now possible but for Murat to secure the river at Vienna, cross with two army corps, and hurry backward toward the northwest to prevent Kutusoff from reaching Moravia. This was possible only if the Austrians had not yet destroyed the bridges over the Danube. It was their bad habit, as Marmont has remarked, when defending the passage of a river to leave the bridge intact to the last moment for the sake of a counter-attack. This they had done at both Lodi and Arcola in Italy, and they had done it once again, all three times to their utter undoing. Entering Vienna on the twelfth, Murat hastened to the Tabor bridge, which, as had been his hope and expectation, he found all laid with combustibles ready to be set on fire by a garrison troop of Austrians who had retreated to the opposite shore, but had not destroyed the bridge. The danger was real and the crisis imminent. Taking advantage of the fact that on the third the Emperor Francis had vainly endeavored to open negotiations with Napoleon, Murat declared to the Austrian commander what he knew to be an untruth — that an armistice had been concluded, and that there was still